



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Astronomers Present Free Star Programs at Grand Canyon National Park, June 13-20, 2009

Grand Canyon, AZ - The nineteenth annual Grand Canyon Star Party will be held from Saturday, June 13 through Saturday, June 20, 2009 on the South and North Rims of Grand Canyon National Park. This event is sponsored by the National Park Service, the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association (South Rim), and the Saguaro Astronomy Club of Phoenix (North Rim). Amateur astronomers from across the country will volunteer their expertise. Free star programs will be offered, and numerous telescopes will be set up to view planets, star clusters, galaxies, and nebulae at night, and to view the sun by day. Grand Canyon is one of the best night sky viewing sites in the United States; and Grand Canyon National Park is proud to be offering a star party event during the International Year of Astronomy.

On the South Rim, events include a slide show nightly at 8:00 p.m. next to Yavapai Observation Station, followed by free telescope viewing. Parking is very limited. Plan to walk or arrive by free shuttle bus. For a comfortable spot at the slide shows, arrive early and bring something to sit on. Telescope viewing continues well into the night. Visitors may arrive anytime after dark.

On the North Rim, the nightly slide program will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Grand Canyon Lodge auditorium. Telescopes will be set up on the porch of the lodge every evening. Look for telescopes set up during the day for solar viewing, and check the bulletin board at the Visitor Center for additional events.

Weather permitting, expect spectacular views of the universe, but be aware that nighttime temperatures at the canyon can be quite cool, even in summer. Those attending the star parties are encouraged to bring warm layers of clothing. Visitors to the South Rim Star Party will need a flashlight for the walk to the viewing area.

When traveling in the park on the South Rim, it is best to find a parking space and use the free shuttle bus system to access points of interest in the Grand Canyon Village area. See the *Park Guide* for tour bus routes and schedules. If you plan to stay overnight at Grand Canyon National Park, plan your visit well in advance. Visit our official website at www.nps.gov/grca, or to receive a free Grand Canyon Trip Planner, call (928) 638-7888.

National parks are protective harbors for some of the last remaining dark skies in this country. The National Park Service has come to embrace night skies as one of the many scenic vistas the agency protects.

To learn more about this year's star parties, visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/star-party.htm. For additional information on the South Rim Star Party, contact Marge Ullmann at (928) 638-7789. For more on the North Rim Star Party, contact Robin Tellis at (928) 638-7739.

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